

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3 have been amended to better define the present invention, but not in response to the outstanding rejections. The amendment to claim 1 is supported in the specification on page 6, line 6, and the amendment to claim 3 is supported by at least Fig. 5A, which shows a check valve 62 that exhausts positive pressure from the inlet 52.

Claims 1-2, 4 and 7 stand rejected under § 103 on the basis of Larsson, Silver and Adams. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection because none of the references, alone or in combination, disclose or suggest an air circuit having an inlet and two separate outputs that produce different air pressure patterns, as in amended claim 1.

The present invention is an air circuit provided between a pump and at least one express kit. The pump produces a single output (a bi-directional or intermittent negative air pressure), and the express kit requires two different pressure patterns (a bi-directional or intermittent negative air pressure, and a unidirectional negative air pressure). The claimed air circuit produces the two different pressure patterns from a single inlet.

Larsson does not disclose or suggest the air circuit of the present invention. Referring to Fig. 6, the output of a pneumatic pump 58 is fed directly to two express kits. The express kits do not require two air pressure patterns, and the device does not produce two different air pressure patterns.

Similarly, Silver merely takes an output from a vacuum pump 38 and feeds it through a hose 39 to an express kit. Two different output pressure patterns are not produced in that device, either.

As the examiner apparently recognizes, Adams does not disclose an air circuit between a pump and an express kit.

Even combined, the cited references would not produce the present invention. This is a strong indication of nonobviousness. Moreover, there is no suggestion or motivation to combine references. There is no reason to use an air circuit in Adams because the bulb is attached directly to the express kit and it is squeezed by hand. The Adams device would not work with the hoses of the other references, because it uses two pump chambers. Accordingly, applicants request that the rejection of claims 1-2, 4 and 7 be withdrawn.

Claim 3 stands rejected under § 103 on the basis of Larsson, Silver, Adams and Niederberger. Applicants traverse this rejection for the reasons given with respect to independent claim 1. In addition, Niederberger does not disclose a check valve in the output of an air circuit located between a pump and an express kit. Niederberger merely discloses the use of a check valve to permit partial aspiration of a vacuum over a breast. The check valve does not exhaust positive pressure from the inlet, as in amended claim 3. Withdrawal of this rejection is also requested.

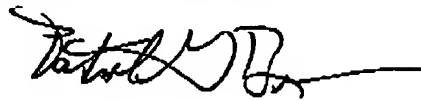
Claims 4-6 stand rejected under § 103 on the basis of Larsson, Silver and Adams. Applicants traverse this rejection for the reasons given with respect to independent claim 1, and request withdrawal.

For the foregoing reasons, applicants believe that this case is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The examiner should call applicants' attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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